

Bible Studies, Series 4, Week 7

Personal Bible Study

Day: 1

Read Philippians 3: 12

Paul starts in verse 12 by saying that he did not achieve "it" yet but that he is striving towards "it" He points to the big things he mentioned previously:

- We can know Christ.
 - We can win against sin and death by virtue of Christ's rising from the death and we can be made new daily.
 - By virtue of Christ's suffering we can die for sin. In a way of speaking we "died on the cross" with him and the old sinful nature in us dies more and more each day.
 - In humility we can hope for our rising in the flesh from death by virtue of Christ's suffering for us.
1. Why could Paul strive towards it in this way?
 2. In which manner so you strive towards it in your daily life?
 3. How does one do it?
 4. This week is going about holiness.

Day: 2

Read Philippians 3: 13 -14

Paul is continuing with the subject as we looked at it yesterday.

1. What are the "forgetting the things behind" that Paul is speaking about?
2. What is the "the mark" he is reaching for?
3. What is the "prize" he will receive?
4. Do you live like that?

Day: 3

Read Philippians 3: 15-16

I think this piece has been responsible for many disagreements amongst Christians. In the older translations of the Bible it often sounds as if we can become perfect in this life. People take sanctification as something we can fully achieve by a "second" blessing. I have even believed it for a while myself. Thinking about it clearly though, it just is not so. Reading "1John 3:9 Everyone who has been born of God does not commit sin, because His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God" is

often used as proof. I think we have to look deeper and read what The Message says "John 3:9 People conceived and brought into life by God don't make a practice of sin. How could they? God's seed is deep within them, making them who they are. It's not in the nature of the God-begotten to practice and parade sin"

We must not make a practice of sin, but we are still human, we will make mistakes and in the process we will commit sin. The point is as a Christian we do not "practice sin" we try to live right, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we move more and more toward "justification." We do not always succeed. Some argue that those are "mistakes" and not sin, I have really seen "sin" in the lives of those claiming justification.

Bottom line: I think it is playing with words, call these, by lack of a better word, "little sins," "mistakes," if you wish, I still think they are sin. Agreed, you do not sin on purpose any more, but because we are human, we do fall into traps from time to time, that is OK though: "1John 1:9 if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1. Now read Philippians 3: 12, 1 John 5: 21, Galatians 2: 20 and 5: 17.
2. It is not for no reason that Jesus taught us to pray " Mat 6:9 - Mat 6:13 therefore pray in this way: Our Father, who is in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."
3. How far have you proceeded on the road of spiritual maturity?

Day: 4

Hebrews 5: 12 - 14

How are we supposed to understand this struggle on the road to sanctification? It is difficult to explain but, we are supposed to grow in stages even in a way we are "complete" already. As a little baby is born with a body that has all that it will need in life, the baby still has to grow in different stages to adulthood.

We are sanctified in Christ a perfect and complete "rebirth" has happened but, we need to grow even though we already have all we need to grow with. We are sanctified but we also need to grow toward sanctification!! It is a bit difficult to understand but I think we all experience that we are growing and that we still have to grow.

1. Now read Hebrews 5: 12-14 again and try to determine how far you have already grown and you have progressed already.
2. A little baby is always beautiful. If the baby does not grow though, and are still a baby after many years, it is a great sorrow.

Day: 5

Read 1 Corinthians 26-31

Our sanctification can only be achieved through our faith in Jesus Christ. So, Philippians 4: 13 is completely true! There can never be any possibility of own achievements or success. Ephesians 3: 17 and John 15: 1-5 confirms it. As we grow we stop trusting our own efforts, we are completely stripped of all self righteousness and we learn to "cling" to God in our faith in His promises. We get to know our own weakness more and more but, we also learn that evil can be overcome in the power of Christ who has won the battle against evil for good.

Faith working out of love in this way is the fulfillment of God's commandments through faith and anything that is not through faith is sin.

1. How does one succeed in doing God's will more and more?
2. To what extent do other people see Christ in you?

Day: 6

Read Romans 12: 4-8

Be careful for misplaced piety. There are many Christians that think sanctification is simply a case of withdrawing completely from the world. They feel their only task in life is to save souls and witness. They are so busy witnessing, they do not fulfill their real calling, they become bad students!

1. Read Romans 12: 4-8 and 1 Corinthians 10: 31. Paul is drawing the Christian as part of Christ's body on earth. A body cannot consist of only a mouth. "Witnessing" means giving your whole life to Christ. You are the salt of the earth and the light to the world (Matthew 5: 13-16.) Only when the salt is put into the food and has disappeared in the food does it give the food a good taste. Only then can it preserve the food as well.
2. Whatever your life's duty is - only when Christ is in your heart and when you are doing your work with gladness to His honor, can you be His co-worker. How can you live and work as it suits a junior co-worker?

Group Bible Study

Read Philippians 3: 12-16

1. In verse 12 Paul says that he is not perfect, but in verse 15 he says he is perfect.
 - 1.1 Is Paul contradicting himself here? How should we understand it?
 - 1.2 What does Paul mean in verse 15? (In the Afrikaans Bible it is translated with "spiritual maturity")
 - 1.3 When does one attain spiritual maturity?

2. Paul says he was taken hold of by God (verse 12 - in Acts 9: 1-15 we read when it happened.) God's plan does not go as dramatic with each of us but we should all "press on."

2.1 How does one make the seriousness of the command in 1 Thessalonica 4: 33 practical how does one strive to become perfect?

2.2 What is the difference of "taken hold of" and "stive?"

3 Paul says he is forgetting the things that are past.

3.1 Is it necessary to keep confessing a sin, that you have already confessed and received forgiveness for, over and over again in front of people? Read proverbs 28: 13

3.2 What did God do with our sin according to Colossians 2: 13-14 and Psalm 103: 8-12? Do you understand Philippians 3: 14 better now?

4. In verse 15 Paul is addressing two groups in the congregation: those that are spiritually mature and those that "think different."

4.1 Who are those that have "something else in mind?"

4.2 What is Paul really saying to each group?

5. How does one succeed in staying on the right track? (Verse 16)